

REMARKS

In the Official Action mailed on **10 March 2006**, the Examiner reviewed claims 1-27. Claims 1-2, 4-11, 13-20, and 22-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Slaughter et al (WO 01/95106, hereinafter “Slaughter”), in view of Sweeney (USPN 6,401,182 hereinafter “Sweeney”). Claims 3, 12, and 21 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Independent claims 1, 10, and 19 were rejected as being unpatentable over Slaughter, in view of Sweeney.

Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 10, and 19 to incorporate allowable limitations from dependent claims 2-3, 11-12, and 20-21, respectively. Dependent claims 2-3, 11-12, and 20-21 have been canceled without prejudice.

Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 10, and 19 as presently amended are in condition for allowance. Applicant also submits that claims 4-9, which depend upon claim 1, claims 13-18, which depend upon claim 10, and claims 22-27, which depend upon claim 19, are for the same reasons in condition for allowance and for reasons of the unique combinations recited in such claims.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the present application is presently in form for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 22 March 2006

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